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DAY 1

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Begin your writing here.

Oh, the Park in the beginning of Fall. A soft wind blowing, birds chirping, the excited squeals of laughing children fill the air. Sunlight shows through the pumpkin colored trees as leaves glide down to the grassy floor. Your little brother hugs on your shirt and points to the playground. "It's okay," you tell him, encouraging him to go play around and be a kid. Life couldn't get a lot better could it?

Well yes, it probably could, you start to think as the police tackle you to the ground and put your little brother in a chokehold. Sirens are screaming as you get kicked out, covered in dirt and mud. Your brother's crying. He doesn't get what's happening. Plus he lost his favorite action figure on the playground, and he's not allowed back in to go get it.

Just another fun, fall day at the Park.

What's wrong with this picture?

Something about your 5 year old brother kicking and screaming after being tackled off the see-saw and manhandled out of the playground by a 200-pound security guard, right?

Maybe this is a bit of an exaggeration, but the state is passing a law to make a mandatory \$2 entry fee into public parks and playgrounds, and there will be punishments for not paying. They probably won't be this severe, but it's still just as outrageous.

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY (continued)

Continue your writing here.

It's just ridiculous. Do you really want to take away some kids only places to run around and be kids? Say you're living in a city. You're a parent to a small child. You can't have him running around in the middle of the street, playing tag with the front of a bus! When you need him to let off some energy, you take him to the park and let him run wild for an hour or two. But what if you can't afford that? I mean, with all this talk about our nation's obesity in the media lately, this surely isn't helping. To some kids, these parks and playgrounds are all they have. They're the only places they can run around and be a kid, and without them, not only will they not have a chance to be free and run around until they're older, they won't be getting much exercise either.

And it's not just about the little kids. What about the teenagers, who want to get out and toss a football around? Honestly, where else are you going to find a wide open field perfect for that? But as they get older, and they have more and more responsibilities, and other things that they need to pay, will they really want to waste \$20 to get in?

Where will actual kids experience nature, if they can't get in the park? There isn't much nature to experience on the sidewalk or a busy street. The parks and playgrounds are important to our states health and happiness, and you shouldn't put a price on that.

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY
(continued)

Continue your writing here.

And to the government, I know you need this money, but how much do you really think you'll raise from this? I think you're going to lose a lot of regular visitors to Fair Park if you put a price on what should be free. What if you hold fundraisers in the free entry park as a way to raise money? You'll keep the public happy and you'll raise the money you need. It's a win-win.

So don't put a price on the park.

Everybody deserves those fall days.

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DAY 2

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Begin your writing here.

People say that in an accident, time slows down. They say there's this calm moment, like the eye of a storm, where you can see what's going to happen and you can see the ground rushing towards you. You know what's happening. You can't stop it. Somehow, that's calming.

Well, those people are right.

I was at Camp Woodward, a skateboarding camp in the middle of Amish country in Pennsylvania. It was a normal day of skating, just my friends and I wandering the camp, looking for somewhere to finally put our boards down and actually ride them. The heat of the summer beat down on us like an unrelenting stream of hammers pounding away at our sanity. I say that because there's this 'madness' that comes with skateboarding. When it's hot, you're sweating and working hard, but you still can't land anything. That madness goes away in only two ways, I was about to find out.

We decided on heading to the smoothie bar ~~happily~~, a bar that could be seen from inside Woodward's famous, world class smoothie bar.

We were begging for the madness to be taken away.

Charlie was the first to put his tail on the coping, suck his wheels up, and drop in. He maneuvered on that ramp like a painter on a canvas, his huge airs and smooth grinds acting like wide brushstrokes painting a picture on the ramp.

After a clean run, his madness was gone.

Then, I was up.

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY (continued)

Continue your writing here.

The drop down to the bottom of the ramp seemed monstrous, and I nervously edged my board to the coping. I was going to try something I'd never landed, and if I landed it, there goes my madness.

I closed my eyes.

I took a deep breath.

I was off.

I rolled my way to the bottom, pumping to gain speed. The familiar "woosh click" of the wheels on smooth wood calmed me. I kept pumping and pumping, gaining more speed until...

I jumped.

I flew off the ramp, spinning to complete the trick.

Then, I looked down.

I don't know what it was, but something blocked me. I kicked my board out from under me, and ever so slowly, I fell. My shoulder met the coping.

POP!

Dislocated shoulder.

That was two years ago. Last year, I came back. I practiced and practiced three months. First into foam pits, then on real wood.

It was a hard and painful road, but I had to keep driving, and eventually, try it again. I approached the coping like last time.

I closed my eyes.

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DAY 2

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LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY
(continued)

Continue your writing here.

I took a deep breath.

* Woo Sh Click *

I had used indurr to get my mind off the madness the first time,
but this time I was going to kill it. Determined, I flew off the ramp
once again. I spun to complete the trick. Ever so slowly...

Guess what?

I killed it.

Continue your writing on the next page if you need to.

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